National Programme for rejuvenating traditional water resources

1794. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Rural Development Ministry decided to begin a National Programme to rejuvenate traditional water resources;

(b) if so, details thereof;

(c) the steps Government have so far taken or propose to take to revive water resources;

(d) whether Union Government is seriously considering to bring any legislation to regulate the use of ground water in view of over-exploitation in the country; and

(e) if so, details thereof and when it will be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ANNASAHEB M.K. PATIL): (a) to (c) Rejuvenation, including desilation of traditional water resources like village ponds / tanks, is proposed to be taken up as one-time exercise under the Watershed Development Programmes and other Schemes being implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development.

(d) and (e) A Model Bill to regulate use of ground water was circulated to the States in 1970 by Ministry of Water Resources for making necessary legislation. Later, the Bill was revised and circulated to the States again in 1992. The Bill was again revised and circulated to the States in June 1996. The State Government of Gujarat has enacted legislation. Tamil Nadu has passed Metropolitan Area Ground Water Regulation Act. The State Governments of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh have passed regulation for drinking water purposes. West Bengal and Karnataka have also passed Bills for water resources conservation, protection and development.

Two-tier Panchayati Raj

1795. SHRI S. NIRAIKULATHAN: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the demand of the Tamil Nadu Government to have a two-tier Panchayati Raj System and to have provision for direct election to the post of Chairman of Block Panchayats;